

MINUTES

HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD REGULAR MEETING

August 3, 2009

**THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER
PUBLIC SAFETY AUDITORIUM, ROOM 213**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kristen McKissick, Chair
Michael Snyder, Vice Chair
Art Emerick, Asst. Codes Administrator
Bill Fontana

STAFF PRESENT: Craig D. Peiffer, Urban Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: See attached attendance signature sheet.

CALL TO ORDER: 6:05 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Emerick moved and Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2009 meeting as presented. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

1 1709 North Second Street to remove and replace the front porch

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Kenneth Litoff, 40 Fickel Hill Road, Gardeners, PA.

Mr. Litoff, in response to the case report, stated the added second door on the primary facade could not be removed or relocated. He asked the HARB for their consideration to use concrete, or if deemed unacceptable, Trex Decking for the porch base, and aluminum wrapped wood columns. He added that the property was three rental units and he was hoping to use durable, low maintenance products.

Mr. Fontana inquired for how long the applicant has owned the property and was he aware of the property being located within a municipal historic district. Mr. Litoff replied he has owned the property for three years and was aware of the district designation.

Ms. McKissick stated that if the projects were constructed using quality traditional materials, maintenance should be limited to typical painting. She added that in consideration of alternative materials; paintable engineered wood products would be her only concession; especially considering the property is of the Arts and Crafts Style. Mr. Snyder added that tongue and groove (T&G) wood also has significant durability with limited maintenance when properly cleaned and painted. Mr. Fontana concurred that T&G was a requirement for the floor and ceiling, and that engineered wood products could be explored.

Mr. Emerick inquired if the applicant was amenable to staff conditions for approval; Mr. Litoff replied he was reluctant to rebuild the porch in traditional materials. Mr. Fontana suggested the applicant had three options, provide no change, explore the engineered products, or agree to the staff conditions for approval. Ms. McKissick added, per the HARB Guidelines, that the alternative material must have the look and feel of wood in order to be considered.

Mr. Litoff inquired if he could extend the width of the porch to incorporate the second door. The HARB agreed that the extension would alter the form and therefore would not be an acceptable alteration.

Ms. McKissick cited staff conditions for approval and inquired if the applicant was willing to meet the provisions; and Mr. Litoff replied yes.

Mr. Emerick moved and Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to approve the request with the conditions listed in the staff report. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

2 1123 Derry Street to demolish the building and grade the lot level

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending approval.

The case was represented by Craig Peiffer for the City of Harrisburg.

Mr. Fontana inquired if a structural evaluation was required for the demolition. Mr. Emerick replied that is standard language used on condemnation orders, so as to advise prospective contractors interested in purchasing the property for rehabilitation, as well as to apprise the Code Bureau of structural conditions.

Ms. McKissick asked why the property at 1125 Derry Street had not been demolished, and postulated if that structure contributed to the deterioration of the subject property.

Mr. Fontana noted a photograph and stated it appears as though the brick masonry has cracked and has begun to pull away from the facade. Mr. Emerick confirmed there was subsidence, and attributed it to exposure to the elements and overgrown vegetation.

Mr. Snyder inquired how much it cost to demolish a structure of this size. Mr. Emerick replied that costs varied depending upon party walls and access, and stated that a typical cost is \$20,000, or if no party wall, then \$14,000.

Mr. Fontana asked who owns the property. Mr. Emerick replied the City has not taken ownership, and therefore, it remains in the ownership of Djahi Abousson. Mr. Fontana then suggested that this property, and possibly the adjacent property at 1125 Derry Street, could be considered for a conservatorship.

Fontana moved and Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to approve the request. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

3 100 North Second Street to install a new sign

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Mitchel Glasser, 4288 Emily Drive, Harrisburg, PA, and William Bietle, Cutting Edge Signs, 2307 Berryhill Street, Harrisburg, PA.

Mr. Glasser indicated that he was amenable to the Planning Bureau Staff's conditions for approval. Mr. Bietle provided a demonstration of the tubular LEDs and indicated the sample was identical to what was proposed for the new sign.

Mr. Snyder asked about the accent point lights. Mr Bietle explained they were approximate two inch square cut outs within the city skyline, on the capitol dome and select buildings, which would be indirectly illuminated and appear like the nighttime city skyline

Mr. Emerick moved and Mr. Fontana seconded the motion to approve the request with the conditions listed in the staff report. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

4 700 Showers Street to install vinyl replacement windows in lieu of existing wood windows.

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending denial.

The case was represented by Jill Lawley, 700 Showers Street, Harrisburg, PA.

Ms. Lawley stated her position to seek approval is based upon the following factors: the property is not historic, is not facing a primary street, the replacement windows will match the shape and size of the existing windows, the current windows are too deteriorated to repair, the vinyl replacement windows are more economical, the color selection, teakwood will closely match the color of the shutters, and the adjacent property was previously approved for vinyl replacement windows.

Mr. Snyder, in reference to the approval for 702 Showers Street, expressed concern over denial of the application, as the HARB strives to be consistent with its decisions. Ms. McKissick concurred with Mr. Snyder, but added that with technical advancements with materials the HARB should consider products that more closely match the features of the original materials, in this case wood windows, for other blocks of modern intrusions, where vinyl has not been previously approved.

Mr. Fontana inquired if teak wood was to be adhered to the vinyl frames and sashes, Ms. Lawley clarified it was a standard color provided by the manufacturer called teak wood.

Mr. Fontana asked if the applicant had explored any other replacement window. Ms. Lawley replied yes, she had explored other types and this was deemed to be the most energy efficient. Ms. McKissick clarified that vinyl windows were rarely the most energy efficient option, and added that perhaps this vinyl window was more energy efficient than other vinyl windows, but numerous other products provide greater energy efficiency. She encouraged the applicant to explore other window materials that exceed the energy efficiency of vinyl replacement windows.

Mr. Snyder moved and Mr. Emerick seconded the motion to approve the request, and added that the applicant may change the construction material in order to improve energy efficiency. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

5 105 Calder Street to construct a deck on the second story roof at the rear of the house

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Adam Brett, 105 Calder Street, Harrisburg, PA.

Mr. Brett indicated that he was amenable to the Planning Bureau Staff's conditions for approval.

Mr. Emerick stated that the Codes Bureau would require an engineer's report and anchoring detail for building permit approval.

Ms. McKissick indicated the drawing provided little information for the handrail, and inquired where it was to be located. Mr. Brett replied the deck was positioned approximately six inches in from the roof edge. He also clarified that the deck would be level, and placed on top of the roof. She then asked if the 36" handrail height was the minimum permitted by code; Mr. Emerick confirmed the dimension. Mr. Snyder asked how high above the roof would the deck be constructed. Mr. Brett replied approximately one foot at the low end and nearly level with the high end.

Mr. Brett stated that the door location was moved further in from the roof edge, to an adjacent window. Both Ms. McKissick and Mr. Emerick stated the door would be

obscured from view from the public right-of-way; and therefore would not require HARB review; the other board members concurred.

Ms. McKissick expressed concern over handrail design for rooftop decks and the consistency of HARB reviews. She inquired what was approved by HARB the previous month for the adjacent structure at 118 Calder Street. Mr. Peiffer replied a shadow box style handrail, constructed using six inch cedar plank, stained to finish.

Ms. McKissick indicated that due to the visibility of the handrails from the public right-of-way, she would prefer the shadow box style in lieu of the proposed balustrade with square balusters. She added that such a style could also be extended to cover the gap created by the roof slope. Mr. Snyder concurred, and stated that the shadow box design may be more cost effective than the proposed balustrade, and is more consistent with the Secretary's Guidelines (Preservation Brief 14), whereas an added feature shall have a visual distinction between old and new. Mr. Fontana asked if the applicant were willing to consider a shadow box style handrail; Mr. Brett replied yes

Mr. Fontana moved and Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to approve the request with the conditions listed in the staff report, with the additional condition that the handrail shall be shadow box style, extend to cover the gap between the roof and the deck; and Planning Bureau Staff shall approve final design. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

6 904 Penn Street to install fiber cement siding in lieu of existing aluminum siding

The case report was read in combination with the case report for 906 Penn Street.

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report for 904 Penn Street, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Bob Burns, 396 Burgoyne Drive, New Cumberland, PA and Tariq Thomas, 4902 Carlisle Pike, Mechanicsburg, PA.

There were no comments from the HARB Members, public attendees, or applicant pertaining to the scope of work for 904 Penn Street. Furthermore, the applicant concurred with the Planning Bureau Staff's conditions for approval

Mr. Snyder moved and Mr. Emerick seconded the motion to approve the request with the conditions listed in the staff report for both 904 and 906 Penn Street. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

7 906 Penn Street to install fiber cement siding in lieu of existing aluminum siding, construct a wood privacy fence at the rear of the property and construct a deck on the second story roof at the rear of the house

The case report was read in combination with the case report for 904 Penn Street.

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report for 906 Penn Street, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Bob Burns, 396 Burgoyne Drive, New Cumberland, PA and Tariq Thomas, 4902 Carlisle Pike, Mechanicsburg, PA.

Mr. Thomas stated he had drawings detailing the proposed deck and fence, and provided copies to the HARB Members and Planning Bureau Staff.

Mr. Burns clarified that there are no existing rear dormers on either 904 or 906 Penn Street, and that their scope of work includes the construction of dormers on both properties to match the style and configuration of those found on the primary facades, with the exception to install doors in lieu of windows for access to the proposed rooftop decks.

Mr. Burns also clarified that the fence is proposed for only in between the two properties. It was determined that the fence would be significantly obscured from view from the public right-of-way, and that a HARB review was not required.

Ms. McKissick inquired if any City guidelines or requirements were applicable to the roof beneath the proposed new decks. Mr. Peiffer replied that the roof was a matter for the Codes Bureau. Mr. Emerick stated that typically a new EPDM roof was installed in advance of the deck construction, and therefore, the lifespan of the roof was tied to the lifespan of the deck. He added that he was unaware of any data or study that indicated the lifespan of an EPDM roof was either prolonged or decreased by the installation of a rooftop deck.

The HARB Members concurred that the roof top deck would be partially obscured from view, and therefore the style of handrail would not become a contributing feature. As such the proposed balustrade style with square balusters was deemed to be in keeping with the Secretary's Guidelines

Mr. Snyder moved and Mr. Emerick seconded the motion to approve the request with the conditions listed in the staff report for both 904 and 906 Penn Street. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

8 1329 North Second Street to install five composite wood windows on the front of the house in lieu of existing wood windows

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending denial.

The case was represented by Stuart Kermes, 1329 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA; Brian Shilling, 650 West Market Street, Gratz, PA; and Andy Matter, 5500 Paxton Street, Harrisburg, PA.

Mr. Kremes asked if the case report was requiring a replacement in-kind of the windows on the primary facade, and Ms. McKissick replied yes, and clarified that the replacement also includes window details. Brian Shilling replied that the MI Product would replicate details stating they craft a product that is like wood. He referenced a sample window and identified that both the interior and exterior are paintable or stainable surfaces. He added that the HARB did approve the product as a replacement for windows at Riverview Manor. Ms. McKissick clarified that HARB's review of the windows for Riverview Manor did not consider the details or color, as the original windows were steel, as opposed to wood, and that the project scope included 1,009 windows, as opposed to five.

Mr. Kremes stated that his intent was not to change the appearance of the window or to install a less costly product such as vinyl, but to increase the window lifecycle and increase energy efficiency. Ms. McKissick cited the Secretary's Guidelines and stated that quality wood windows were widely available and fabricated to replicate details. She added that historic properties are sought for such details, and that any concessions must be carefully considered for their long term affect on the subject property and district.

It was pointed out that the adjacent property has vinyl replacement windows on the primary facade. Ms. McKissick replied that was the reason why the HARB exists, and added that it is unlikely that the windows will ever be restored, and thus a distinctive character-defining feature has been lost.

Mr. Shilling indicated that the MI composite window has been approved in historic districts in Annapolis, Maryland; Wilmington, Delaware; Williamsburg, Virginia and Arlington, Virginia. Mr. Fontana inquired if these were universally approved, and Mr. Shilling clarified that most were individual cases.

Mr. Matter stated that the composite material was far superior to that of vinyl, and that the HARB earlier in the evening approved a case for vinyl replacement windows. Ms. McKissick replied there is a significant distinction between an 1880 and 1979 structure. Mr. Matter asked if the HARB would consider an aluminum-clad product, and Ms. McKissick replied that the finish is a contributing factor, of which a clad product can not achieve the stipulated criteria. Mr. Matter then inquired if the HARB would consider the composite window with an exterior wood veneer, and both Ms. McKissick and Mr. Emerick stated a veneer product also did not fit the criteria.

Mr. Snyder inquired if the manufacturer could guarantee the wood and glass ratio, as well as the window location within the brick wall, and Mr. Shilling stated yes. Ms. McKissick stated that she felt the composite product was a good alternative for wood replacement windows, but not for this location, and due to the product not achieving all requisite

criteria. She asked if MI Windows and Doors fabricated an all wood window, and Mr. Shilling replied no.

Mr. Fontana stated that he felt the HARB was being inextricably drawn to composite materials and that he is looking for the industry to develop a product that meets the touch criteria, that of the look and feel of wood.

Mr. Emerick moved and Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to deny the request. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

9 1416-18 Lawton Street to install an awning, replace windows and paint all exterior surfaces

Mr. Peiffer gave a synopsis of the case report, recommending approval with conditions.

The case was represented by Mark Maloney, 1210 North Atherton Street, Suite 207, State College, PA; Diane Ramp, 6375 Mercury Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA and Louis Rotegliano, 1420 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA.

Mr. Maloney provided an aerial image of the subject property and stated his building is the only one fronting on Lawton Street, a tertiary street and that he felt it doesn't contribute to the district as other properties on primary and secondary streets. He added that it was built as a garage, measures approximately 95 feet by 90 feet, has approximately thirty internal parking spaces, and is currently approximately fifty percent occupied. He summarized that the building is unusual for the district, and that he felt the previous owner never finished the building, which included painting the masonry facade. He stated it was his understanding that a partially painted facade would permit full painting of the facade. He then clarified the prime coat was a binding primer and that the manufacturer stated it could be partially removed, but unlikely that all the paint could be removed.

Mr. Peiffer explained the sequence of events for the painting. He stated that the work was performed without a building permit or historic district permit and that the contractor was not licensed in the City. He stated he received a telephone call from a resident complaining of the painting and visited the site the following day. He contacted the realtor, Ms. Ramp and advised that work was performed without requisite approvals. Subsequent to the stop work order, he met with the owner and realtor and advised that painting masonry in an historic district was typically only approved when the surface had been previously painted and that exterior work deemed not a replacement in-kind required HARB review.

Mr. Maloney explained that he had no agreement for the painting. He had approved the removal of vegetation, including poison ivy from the southern facade, but had advised that work was to stop until he could review the condition of the masonry.

Mr. Rotegliano stated that he had talked with several neighbors and all of whom agreed that painting the masonry was an improvement. Ms. Dum, 113 Calder Street and Mr. Wilson, 118 Calder Street, stated that no one came to them to ask about the painting. Mr. Wilson added that he was before HARB last month for his home renovation. He stated that he is in the process of a full gut rehab of his property and he received all approvals in advance of any work. He stated that he felt an after-the-fact review should not be given the same consideration as an application submitted before work has begun.

Ms. Ramp stated that the property in its current state was difficult to sell, as it had no curb appeal. She added that it is her experience that prospective buyers want a property that is fully rehabbed. Ms. McKissick replied historic districts are all about curb appeal. She added that painting a masonry facade is the easy way out, and that masonry repointing is far less maintenance than painting masonry. She concluded that work after-the-fact is an indicator of misunderstandings by all parties involved, and that painting masonry facades is not helping the building or district. Ms. Ramp stated that she felt painting the masonry would unify the building, and Ms. McKissick replied a better approach would have been to remove the approximate one third of paint from the eastern facade.

Mr. Rotegliano stated the he had attempted to power wash part of the facade and that he couldn't remove the bonded primer paint. He added that even if the paint were to be removed, the building would then require full repointing, at significant cost and the facade would still appear as a hodgepodge. Mr. Maloney added that he was trying to unify both the interior and exterior of the building, and that he was dealing with a difficult building. He noted that Lawton Street is a dark alley and that painting the building made the alley appear lighter.

Mr. Fontana inquired how many coats of paint were to be added to the bonding primer; Mr. Maloney replied approximately two more. He added that the final color was similar to the rendering he included with his historic district application. He clarified that the manufacturer stated it would be possible to remove up to seventy percent of the bonded primer paint. He also stated that the primer was tinted and formulated for use on masonry.

Ms. McKissick inquired of the color for the steel windows, Mr. Maloney replied most likely black. Mr. Fontana asked about a color for the garage door, and Mr. Maloney replied he was open to HARB member's suggestions and added that one door was wood and the other metal. Mr. Fontana then inquired how the applicant would unify the garage doors, and Mr. Rotegliano suggested buying one to match the other.

Mr. Emerick stated that painting soft brick and mortar joints can, in some cases, accelerate masonry deterioration. He added that if the wall was also painted on the interior it would worsen the scenario, as there would be little way for the wall to "breathe." He cited a recent case on Muench Street, where the masonry was covered over and the structure appeared sound from the exterior. However, the mortar had deteriorated

to the point where the structure collapsed and the adjacent party wall had been compromised to a point where the adjacent structure may also require demolition. He stated that he felt the applicant should be required to clean several sections of the bond primer to ascertain the appropriate solution for the masonry wall. Ms McKissick asked if Mr. Emerick could visit the site and verify the condition of the masonry and oversee the paint removal.

Mr. Fontana asked the applicant if he were willing to remove sections of paint. Mr. Maloney replied he was amenable; however, expressed concern over damaging the masonry.

Mr. Snyder stated that he felt the HARB should approve the application with staff conditions, as the applicant had created a problem by painting the masonry. Mr. Emerick concurred and added an additional condition to require four two foot square test samples for paint removal to be performed in adherence to industry standards by an experienced contractor. Ms McKissick added that Mr. Emerick should verify the results of the paint removal and if deemed unacceptable to remove the paint, then the applicant would be required to submit a paint scheme to HARB for their review.

Mr. Emerick moved and Mr. Snyder seconded the motion to approve the request with the conditions listed in the staff report, with the added condition that the applicant shall contact a paint removal contractor to test four two foot square samples using industry standards, as outlined in the case report, and contact Mr. Emerick, Codes Administrator, at (717) 255-6560 to verify the removal and ascertain the appropriate solution for the masonry wall. If paint removal is deemed too damaging to the masonry, then the applicant shall submit to the HARB a paint palette for their review. If paint removal is deemed the appropriate method for restoration, then the applicant shall adhere to the following conditions for approval, numbered condition 7 and 8. The Board approved the motion by a vote of 4-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Peiffer summarized the status of the two proposed municipal historic districts. In regards to the Academy Manor District, he stated that the Harrisburg Planning Commission had opted to table their vote for one month to allow for additional public participation. He emphasized that the Harrisburg Planning Commission intended to vote upon the application at their next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Wednesday, September 2nd, beginning at 6:30 pm in Council Chambers, City Government Center, 10 North Second Street. In regards to the North Front Street District, he stated that the Planning Bureau intended to submit the application seeking National Eligibility status to the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission's Bureau for Historic Preservation by August 14th.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Snyder moved and Mr. Emerick seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 9:20 P.M.